1: Whiting E-5 (1936-1937) 1941
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the boss gardeners normally prepare another bee to break the ground for the yam hills, although the gardening group may do this work alone. If the latter is the case, the women of the group work with the men instead of preparing the feast. Since Kwoma gardens are always on a slope, each hill is made by leveling the ground into a little terrace about a foot square. This is accomplished by means of a spadelike digging stick. When the slope is especially steep, the terraces are buttressed by a retaining wall of sticks laid one on top of the other, held on one side by the pressure of the earth and on the other by pegs stuck in the ground. These miniature retaining walls prevent the hills from being washed out by a heavy rain. The worker, with a final thrust of his digging stick into the middle of each terrace, pries open a hole large enough to receive a seed yam.

The Kwoma consider that the success of the crop depends more upon planting than upon any other part of the gardening process. Only an adult man who has become a member of *Nokwi*, the highest stage of the yam cult, may do this. They believe that if a youth or a woman should put the seed yams in the ground, the yield would be meager, hard, and unpalatable. Normally, one of the boss gardeners has attained the proper status to plant yams. If not, then the nearest patrilineal relative who is a member of *Nokwi* will perform the task in return for a share in the produce of the garden. On the night before a man is to plant yams, he shares with other members of *Nokwi* a ritual soup which is believed to be potent enough to kill a woman or child. From this time on until the yam shoots break the ground, he may not chew betel, scratch himself except with a stick, or smoke except by holding his cigarette with tweezers. If he does not carry out these rituals, it is believed that his yams will not germinate. The planter performs his task by putting the yam into the hole in the hill so that the butt is down and the head (stem) is up, and the axis roughly perpendicular to level ground. He then covers the yam with earth so that the upper end is just below the surface.

Kwoma beliefs about blood appear again to determine a

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beliefs about blood appear again to determine a facet of the yam-planting complex. It is believed that in the process of planting yams a man's blood becomes associated with the seed, and hence contaminates the produce. Thus, if a man should eat his own harvest, it would be equivalent to eating his own blood, and he would sicken and die. If he heeds the warning implied in this belief, he must have yams that are planted by someone else or go without them. Kwoma culture resolves the dilemma as follows: at the time of planting, a section of the garden large enough to produce sufficient yams for the planter's personal needs is set aside. He does not plant this section, but calls on a *brother* to do it for him. This provides a section whose produce will not be contaminated by his blood and which he may therefore eat with impunity. In return he plants a similar section in his *brother's* garden.

After the yams are put in the ground, nothing but weeding need be done until the sprouts appear. The women of the gardening group do this, bending from the waist rather than kneeling, and pulling the weeds with thumb and fingers. They keep the ground clear until the plants have a good start and then allow the weeds to spring up unheeded.

Soon after the yam sprouts have broken the ground, stringers must be provided to support the climbing vines. In preparation for this, men and boys cut lianas from the forest and split them into sections about the diameter of the little finger and about thirty feet long. They tie a loop formed by a half knot on the standing part on one end of each of these ropes and coil them into bundles. The women carry these bundles in their net bags to the garden, where the men hang the lianas by the loops from the branches of the denuded trees. To do this they use a long bamboo pole with a cross stick, lashed a few inches from the top to prevent the loop from sliding down the pole. The free ends of the lianas are pegged to the ground a few inches from each yam hill. Each hill is thus provided with a stringer, one end of which is attached to a branch and the other to a peg in the ground. Once every few days thereafter the men go over the garden and train the yam tendrils on the stringer. The gar-

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dener takes care not to place one stringer underneath the other, for this would keep sun and rain from the lower vine.

Once the vines have a firm hold on the stringers, nothing need be done to the garden until the time of harvesting. The gardening group digs the yams with a digging stick. The tubers are then picked up in net bags and carried by the women to the dwelling.

The produce from each section is kept separate so that each member of the gardening group has his or her own yams rather than a lien on a common store. Each person's share is put in a separate bin in the small storehouse, which is built near the dwelling. This storehouse is constructed like a dwelling but has no porch. It is floored with sago spathe to prevent the yams from rotting as a result of contact with the damp earth. The bins are also constructed of sago spathe.

Although yams form the bulk of the crop, the Kwoma utilize the cleared site to produce other vegetables as well. Taro plants are set out, and tobacco and spinach seeds are broadcast between the yam hills. Unlike yams, these latter seeds may be planted by any person—adolescent or adult. There is a belief, however, that if tobacco seeds are sown by women the leaves will be overmild. In order to take full advantage of the cleared site, the boss gardeners set out banana, plantain, and coconut trees which mature after the yams are harvested, but before the towering hardwoods grow up to shut out the sunlight.

In addition to planting a garden, the Kwoma man sets out numerous useful trees around his dwelling. He sets out betel pepper vines from clippings, plants areca-nut palms from sprouted nuts, and puts in seed of a small tree from whose bark thread is made. The orchard also includes two trees whose leaves are used respectively for the inner and outer wrappings for sago briquettes, a large tree which bears an edible berry-like fruit, another which bears a large oblong red fruit, a bush whose leaves are used as greens in soup, as well as a few banana, pawpaw, and breadfruit trees. As many coconut palms as space will allow are also planted.

Pig hunting is an occupation which a Kwoma male does

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[For information on the Kwoma Yam Cult, sometimes referred to as a male secret society, see category 794.]

Gardening-- planting of yams

244
241 In preparation for the planting of yams, the land is cleared, the
[313] tops of large trees are cut off and the small trees are chopped down entirely. The small trees are allowed to lie on the ground for a couple of months, or until they are thoroughly dried. The refuse is then collected and burned. The ground is broken with a digging stick and the planter puts in the yams.

[311] Because of the hilly terrain, small terraces about a foot square are built. If the slope is very steep a small buttress is made with pegs stuck in the ground and cross sticks thrown behind them for a sort of retaining wall. If the slope is gentle, the terrace is made by simply leveling out the earth. The breaking of the ground is done with a pointed stick which is forced in the ground and then pried up hill while the ground is forced out and down. This prying is repeated until the terrace
244 is formed and the ground is softened. The seeds are planted butt end down and the head up at right angles to the level ground, and covered so that the stem is just below the surface.

After the yams have begun to come up, stringers are put up for the vines. Split liana stringers are suspended from the branches of the cut-off trees and pegged to the ground beside each yam hill. (See figure) Care is taken so that one stringer is not pegged above another depriving it of rain and sunlight. This is done for all yam plants, the vines twining around the stringers.

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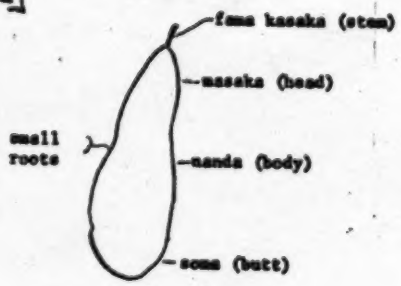
[284]

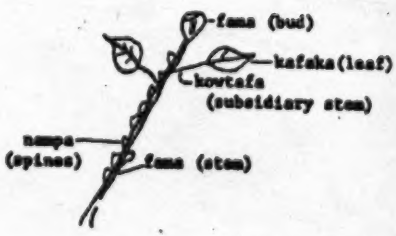
Split liana stringers

Split liana stringers and vines as attached to tree stumps

Names for descriptive parts of yams

[192]





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Listed below are some of the varieties of yams and a description of them.

afosampa kow-- a totem of the Wanyi sib. The fruit is very large; the leaf is dark green and large.

hangwe-- The fruit is long and dark, covered with fine roots. The leaf is light green or white. There are needles on the vine.

hayamkwe-- A totem of the Hayamakwe sib. The leaf is light green or white, the vine very spiny.

hefu nanyi (snake)--The fruit is very long and thin. The leaf is long, narrow and dark green.

kasaye nanyi (a bird)-- A totem of the Hayamakwe sib. The fruit is very large; the leaf dark green, and the vine spineless.

kayahafa-- The fruit is long and covered with roots. It resembles the variety afosampa.

mandowe-- The fruit is long and light colored with fewer roots than the hangwe yam. There are needles on the vine; the leaf is dark green.

mandowe kow-- A totem of the Wanyi sib. The fruit is dark skinned, with some roots; the leaf large and dark green.

mbutawi kow-- A totem of the Tug sib. The fruit is large, has no roots and is dark. The leaf is spineless, dark green.

mbagasak-- A totem of the Tug sib. The fruit is rounded and dark, with roots near the head near the stem but not below; the leaf is dark green.

nanya-- The fruit is round and lumpy; the leaf long and narrow. There are no needles on the vine.

ngayatafa-- The fruit has no roots except around the leaf of the fruit near the stem; the leaf is green and the vine spiny.

nogwaho-- A totem of the Tug sib. The fruit has no roots, the leaf is white.

wasimpira (pig's tooth)--A totem of the Wanyi sib. The fruit is large and flat. The leaf is dark green; there are no spines on the vine.

woya-- A variety of wild yam with long fruit and a small leaf.

Other vegetables

244 [192] Mbiraka, native spinach, is planted in between the yam hills. The seeds are simply broadcast on top of the ground. This is done just after the yams are planted. When the yams are ready to be taken out, all the spinach which has not already been gathered and eaten is pulled up, wrapped in a palm spathe, and stored in the house . The seed pods on these are now ripe. They dry in the house. When a new garden is planted, the dried stalks are taken to the field and shaken over the ground, and those seeds which have shelled into the palm spathe are broadcast by hand. The rain washes the seeds into the ground.

[192] Weru, is a variety of pumpkin which was(recently) introduced; it is planted by broadcasting the seeds on top of the ground. Weron , a watermelon, is similarly planted.

245 192 252 [462] Bananas are planted by either men or women; the suckers are transplanted. There are several varieties grown: mbwiye, eaten raw or cooked; ngayamwe, eaten raw or cooked; fayambiyef, eaten cooked only; wasifi, eaten raw or cooked; afojokwe, eaten cooked only; yayofa, eaten raw or cooked; ngarafaye, eaten raw or cooked.

249 [245] Betel nut, kwasa, and coconut are planted by either men or women. Betel paper , kwasa , is planted by both men and women near the house. Buds of the vine are clipped and inserted in the ground. The hole is made by a digging stick or dibble.

Varieties of Taro

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afiyengwat-- A totem of the Tug sib.

harama-- A totem of the Tug sib. The leaf is green with dark green squired; the stalk dark green.

menega eaka-- The leaf is dark green on top while the underside is a slightly bluish light green. The stem is light green.

nawukamayi-- A totem of the Hayamakwo sib. The leaf is large, dark green with light green splotches. The stalk is mahogany red.

The head of a taro is called nasaka and the body one . A young shoot is called yeyi.